



It's Monday, August 2, 2021. In today's issue: Chimney Rock celebration; Court House Riot 360 video; Historical Games Olympics; Willa Cather's mustache; Indigenous boarding schools; Summer stories; Back-to-school stories.

Chimney Rock celebrates reopening, receives award



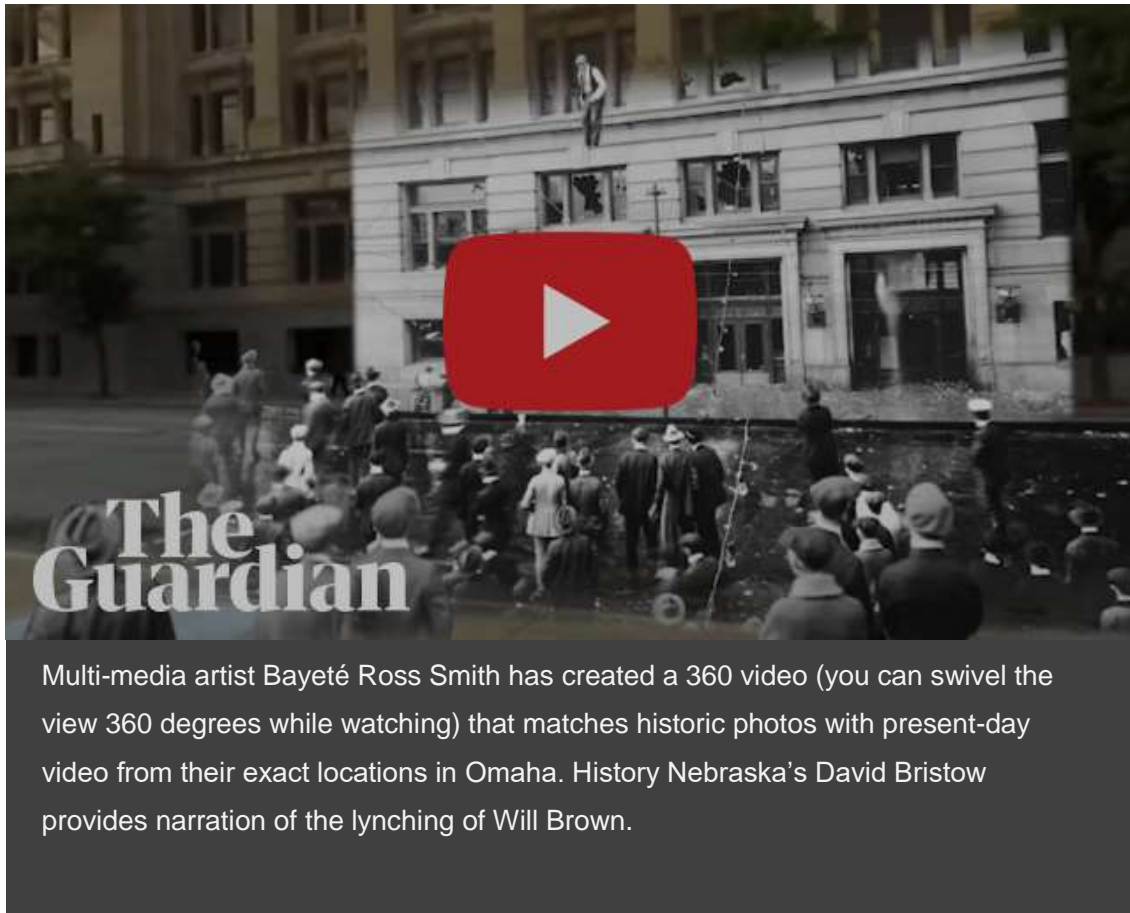
Back in 2019 we were designing new exhibits for the soon-to-be expanded Chimney Rock Museum. We were going to have it ready by the spring of 2020. We would host an event, have a ribbon cutting with our huge scissors. It's going to be great, we said.

You know what happened next. The museum did re-open—eventually—but the official ribbon-cutting was delayed until July 17, 2021.

History Nebraska received the Rising Star Award from the NEBRASKAland Foundation, given “in recognition of History Nebraska’s preservation and maintenance of the Chimney Rock National Historic Site and the expansion and renovation of the Ethel & Christopher J. Abbott Visitor Center.” The award recognizes outstanding new tourism attractions or significant expansions to existing attractions, and economic and social development efforts.



Omaha's 1919 Court House Riot like you've never seen it before

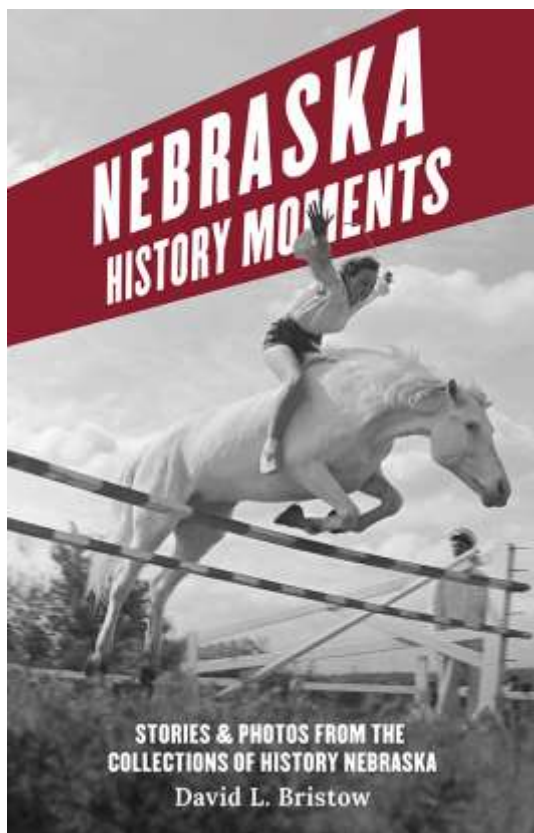


Multi-media artist Bayeté Ross Smith has created a 360 video (you can swivel the view 360 degrees while watching) that matches historic photos with present-day video from their exact locations in Omaha. History Nebraska's David Bristow provides narration of the lynching of Will Brown.



Historical Games Olympics, August 7

How are your hula-hoop skills? Are you good at four-square, stick dice, or ball and cup? Try these and other historical games enjoyed by past generations of kids. Come to the Nebraska History Museum Saturday, August 7, from 10 to 2. The event is free and open to children of all ages. The first 150 people to arrive will receive a free snow cone from SnowDaze Lincoln! [Read more.](#)



Nehawka's yellow stop sign, Willa Cather's mustache: New book serves small doses of Nebraska's rich history

The *Lincoln Journal Star* featured History Nebraska's new book, *Nebraska History Moments*. [Keep reading.](#)

The book is sold at History Nebraska sites, [and online](#). Sign up for a free, weekly "[Nebraska History Moment](#)" [email!](#)

Indigenous boarding schools in Nebraska



History Nebraska employees were deeply saddened by the recent discoveries of Indigenous children's remains at residential schools in Canada. Nebraska has its own ugly past with "Indian Schools." Here are some resources from our collections. [Keep reading.](#)

Board of Trustees election

As you know, a fifteen-member board of trustees directly governs History Nebraska. As a member of History Nebraska, you elect twelve members to the History Nebraska Board of Trustees, four from each of the state's three congressional districts, for a three-year term. The governor appoints the remaining three trustees.

Also, as a member, you can self-nominate for an opportunity to become a board member. Board members carry a great deal of responsibility and help

ensure History Nebraska continues to move forward to serve all Nebraskans best. If you are interested, [visit our website to learn more](#). The application deadline is August 16, 2021.

Once the ballot is finalized, you will receive an email to cast your vote for this year's candidates. Thank you for being a member of History Nebraska!

Summer Stories

Making Ice Cream in 1910



Have you ever made ice cream with one of these? Try your hand at these [vintage ice cream recipes](#).

Fairmont's insulated ice cream bag



Insulated bags aren't new. This Fairmont Creamery Company bag promised to keep your ice cream from melting for up to one hour if kept tightly sealed. [Keep reading.](#)

Fun and Games



When it's too hot to go outside, it's time to play board games in the basement.

[Keep reading.](#)

Omaha's Memorial Park riots of 1971



Chief Andersen . . . makes unsuccessful appeal for crowd to leave park.

—World-Herald Photos by Phil Johnson.

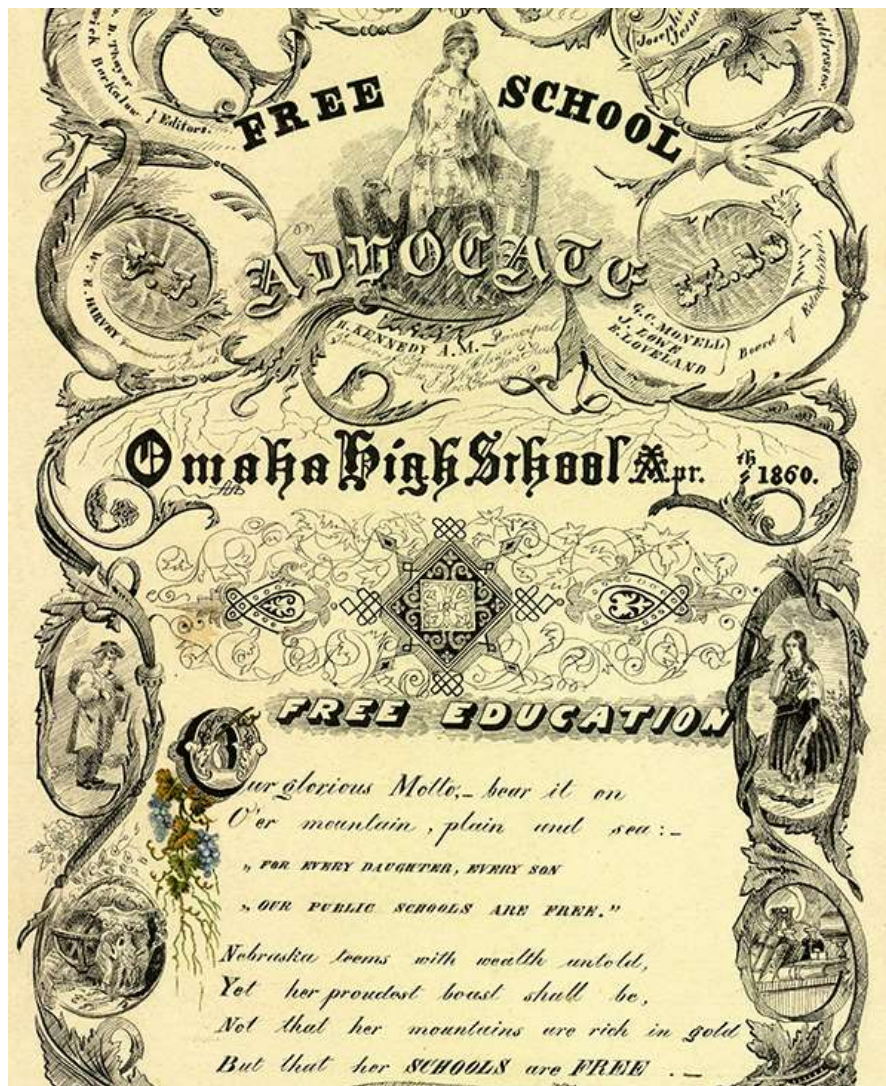
Memorial Park was a popular summertime youth hangout in the 1960s and '70s, but when the city mandated a curfew, things got completely out of hand.

[Keep reading.](#)

Back-to-school stories

When school was free and teachers were cheap

Here are two stories in honor of a new school year. Both relate to the idea of free, taxpayer-supported education.



An 1860 edition of the *Free School Advocate*, published by Omaha high school students, celebrates an idea that was not yet fully embraced across the US: free public education. [Keep reading.](#)



Somebody has to pay for public schools. How much is a teacher worth? Here's what Nebraska paid teachers in the 1920s. [Keep reading.](#)



History Nebraska Newsletter, David Bristow, Editor, history.nebraska.gov

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Complete articles:

Indigenous boarding schools in Nebraska



Photo: Pawnee children at their reservation boarding school in Nance County, Nebraska, circa 1871

By Araceli Hernandez, Digital Outreach Educator; David Bristow, Editor; and Jessica Stoner, Education Associate

August 2, 2021

History Nebraska employees were deeply saddened by the recent discoveries of Indigenous children's remains at residential schools in Canada. We cannot imagine the hurt that has long been experienced by the affected families, relatives, and communities. In the words of Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, the unmarked graves "reaffirm truth that they have long known." Our thoughts are with them.

As a historical institution, we acknowledge the harm and lasting negative impact that such institutions have had on Indigenous communities, not only in Canada but also across the United States.

Nebraska has its own ugly past with "Indian Schools." While there is much work yet to be done, here are links to some materials that we hope will shine a light on systemic racism, discrimination, and marginalization experienced by Indigenous communities.

The U.S. Industrial Indian School in Genoa

(PDF) Wilma A. Daddario, "[**They Get Milk Practically Every Day': The Genoa Indian Industrial School, 1884-1934**](#)," *Nebraska History Magazine* (1992).

In an effort to assimilate Indian children into white society, non-reservation boarding schools were built. These schools were located far from reservations to reduce contact between the children and their parents and Indian customs. Genoa, Nebraska, was selected as a school site because the government already owned the building previously used for the Pawnee reservation headquarters. Most of the children in the Genoa school made friends, adjusted to harsh conditions, and learned the art of showing a "white" veneer to get through their school years. But they paid a high price for their education in terms of their physical and emotional health. They were separated from their families and there was not enough money to adequately feed, clothe, and educate them. Full assimilation of the Indian

children into white society did not occur and the schools began to close in 1901. Genoa school closed in 1934.

Grace Stenberg Parsons, "[The Indians as I Knew Them - Memories of the Genoa Indian School](#)"

As the daughter of the blacksmithing instructor at the Genoa Indian School in Genoa, Nebraska, Parsons observed the young Native American children who attended the school on a daily basis from 1907-1911. This short memoir of her experiences gives details about her childhood growing up on the Crow Reservation in Montana and living at the Genoa Indian School in Nebraska. Although her narrative is written from a White perspective that reflects some of the attitudes of her time, she provides a vivid account of conditions at the school. The original manuscript can be found in History Nebraska's collections: [RG1298.AM](#).

Genoa Indian School Digital Reconciliation Project

The Genoa Indian School Digital Reconciliation Project is a collaboration between the University of Nebraska-Lincoln; the Genoa U.S. Indian School Foundation; Community Advisors from the Omaha, Pawnee, Ponca, Santee Sioux, and Winnebago tribes of Nebraska; and descendants of those who attended Genoa. This website provides many primary source materials about various aspect of the school and its students.

To learn more about Nebraska's Indian Schools

Below are resources for researchers who may be working on school projects, scholarly research, or just people who are curious to see what artifacts and documents still exist.

What we know about these artifacts and documents varies in breadth and depth. The details we have are in the links. Most items need more research and, ideally, the perspective of the cultural leaders of the relevant tribes, because historical writing and museum collections tend to reflect the priorities and perspectives of the dominant society.

View nearly 300 Genoa Indian School photographs from History Nebraska

collections: https://nebraskahistory.pastperfectonline.com/photo?utf8=%E2%9C%93&search_criteria=RG4422&searchButton=Search

Other Genoa Indian School items from History Nebraska Collections

NAME	AGE	GRADE	RESERVATION & TOWN	TRIBE	RELIGION	PARENTS DEAD	
						FATHER	MOTHER
1. Mitchell, Andrew	5	1	Pottawatomie Reser. Mayetta, Kansas	Pottawatomie	Catholic	No	Yes
2. Thurman, Marie	6	1	Sac & Fox Reser. Tama, Iowa	Sac and Fox	Presbyterian	Yes	No
3. Allen, Louis	9	1	Pottawatomie Reser. Mayetta, Kansas	Pottawatomie	Presbyterian	No	No
4. Strong, Eugene	9	1	Pottawatomie Reser. Mayetta, Kansas	Pottawatomie	Catholic	No	No
5. Spitto, Andrew	12	1	Pottawatomie Reser. Mayetta, Kansas	Pottawatomie	Catholic	Yes	Yes
6. Young Bear, Dewey	6	1	Sac & Fox Reser. Tama, Iowa	Sac and Fox	Presbyterian	No	Yes
7. Mitchell, Sarah	9	1	Osage Reservation Hoxey, Nebraska	Osage	Presbyterian	Yes	Yes
8. Moore, Laura	6	1	Pottawatomie Reser. Mayetta, Kansas	Pottawatomie	Catholic	No	Yes
9. Mitchell, Cecelia	7	2	Pottawatomie Reser. Mayetta, Kansas	Pottawatomie	Catholic	No	Yes
10. Webster, Lenore	10	2	Osage Reservation Hoxey, Nebraska	Osage	Presbyterian	No	No
11. Shuckhamee, Virginia	8	3	Kickapoo Reservation Mayetta, Kansas	Kickapoo	Methodist	No	No
12. Moore, William	9	3	Pottawatomie Reser. Mayetta, Kansas	Pottawatomie	Catholic	No	Yes
13. White, Richard	12	3	Osage Reservation Hoxey, Nebraska	Osage	Presbyterian	No	Yes
14. Allen, Robert	11	3	Pottawatomie Reser. Mayetta, Kansas	Pottawatomie	Presbyterian	No	No
15. Baxter, Charlie	12	3	Osage Reservation Hoxey, Nebraska	Osage	Catholic	No	Yes
16. Young Bear, Flora	10	4	Sac & Fox Reser. Tama, Iowa	Sac and Fox	Presbyterian	No	Yes
17. Mitchell, Zella	10	4	Pottawatomie Reser. Mayetta, Kansas	Pottawatomie	Catholic	No	Yes
18. Baxter, Mary	11	4	Osage Reservation Hoxey, Nebraska	Osage	Catholic	No	Yes
19. Siann, Doris	11	5	Kickapoo Reservation Mayetta, Kansas	Kickapoo	Methodist	No	No
20. Moore, Alice	14	5	Pottawatomie Reser. Mayetta, Kansas	Pottawatomie	Catholic	Yes	Yes
21. Baxter, Evelyn	14	5	Osage Reservation Hoxey, Nebraska	Osage	Catholic	No	Yes
22. Webster, Mary Jane	11	5	Osage Reservation Hoxey, Nebraska	Osage	Presbyterian	No	No

Roster, Genoa Indian School 1933-

1934 <https://nebraskahistory.pastperfectonline.com/webobject/D6840DFC-2BD7-4FC8-9932-718111473082>



11055-2558 - Spoon, Souvenir; Boys Home, Indian School, Genoa, NE

Other Indigenous Boarding Schools in Nebraska

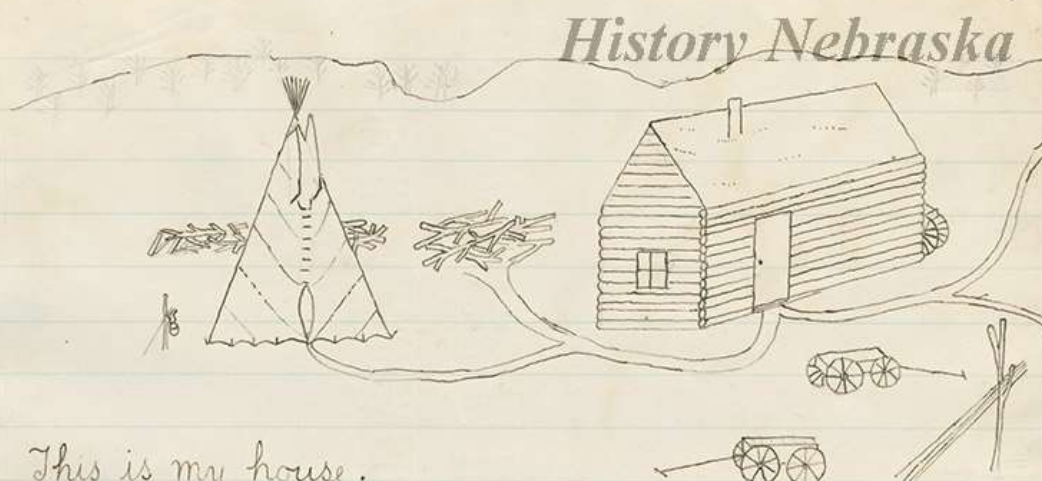
Manuscript collections (historical documents paper, but not digitized yet): These links to finding aid (sort of a table of contents for the collection) explains what's in the collection. As these items are not yet digitized, you can check them out by visiting the Reference Room of the History Nebraska Library/Archives in-person on Fridays, between 9:00am-4:00pm. [History Nebraska's Reference Room](#)

- [Eunice Stabler, 1885-1963, Omaha tribe, attended Genoa Indian School \[RG 2585.AM\] History Nebraska - Manuscript collection](#)
- [James Henry Red Cloud, 1879-1960 \[RG1355.AM\] | History Nebraska - Manuscript collection](#)

- [Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions \[RG2683.AM\] Omaha Mission School correspondence.](#)
- [Santee Normal Training School \(Santee, Neb.\) \[RG2497.AM\]](#)

Artifacts:

701 artifacts and photos can be found in a search of History Nebraska's online resources using the search terms of "Indian School." https://nebraskahistory.pastperfectonline.com/search?utf8=%E2%9C%93&search_criteria=%22Indian+School%22&searchButton=Search



This is my house.

My old grand mother and her old husband live in the teepe. We have three old wagons around my house and some teepe poles leaning on a high post. We have two wood piles.

One wood pile is for my mother and the other is for my grand mother.

When I first going to school, four men build our house up and I was glad to live in the house.

We live in a teepe before and some frogs were jumping all around the teepe.

A man gave the house to my mother and he want a horse for it.

When the winter comes my grand mother and her old man live with us in the house.

30

Margie Red Cedar.
Age 12 years.

Margie Red Cedar, 1902 essay and drawing, Pine Ridge Agency Day School (7294-3734). <https://nebraskahistory.pastperfectonline.com/webobject/121EF45E-A033-431A-A950-601297422317>



Book, Diary/Notebook, From Indian School, 1902 (11055-2912) <https://nebraskahistory.pastperfectonline.com/webobject/42A13A2C-7BBE-4DE1-BC9E-936938237330>

Annual U.S. Department of the Interior reports

These reports detail Agency Indian Schools of Nebraska.

[Tribal Documents Archive | Page 30](#) - While told from the perspective of the non-Native, Indian agent, these links to annual Superintendent reports can provide some insight into facilities and structure of these schools. To use, click on the year you'd like to read about, and then scroll down to the table of contents (pp.3-4 of PDF for 1877), (pp. 34-36 of PDF for 1866). Then look for the tribe you'd like to read about. The tribe might listed by state or if during territorial times, by region.

Categories:

[Native Americans](#)

Making Ice Cream in 1910

Who wants ice cream? Photographer John Nelson of Ericson, Nebraska captured this little sweetie taking a turn cranking the handle of an ice cream maker in about 1910.

Making ice cream was often a family activity. The cream mixture was placed in the interior compartment of the ice cream maker which contained a paddle connected to the hand-crank. The more the cream mixture is cranked the smoother the ice cream. Ice and rock salt were then placed between the interior compartment and the exterior bucket. The salt causes the ice to melt and lowers the temperature below the fresh water freezing point, but the water does not freeze due to the salt content. The sub-freezing temperature helps slowly freeze and make the ice cream.



Do you want to try your hand at a vintage ice cream recipe? Check out the page from the White Ribbon Cook Book by the Clay County Temperance Union published in 1900 for “Ices, Ice Creams and Beverages” from the Nebraska Library Collection at History Nebraska.

ICES, ICE CREAM AND BEVERAGES.

Maple Mousse.—Whip 1 pint sweet cream dry, add to this 1 cup maple syrup, and one tablespoonful powdered sugar. Flavor with vanilla. Beat all together, put in covered mold, and pack in ice with salt. Serve in glasses.—Irene Peterson.

Excellent Lemon Ice.—1 quart sweet milk, 1 pint sugar, juice of 3 lemons, after it begins to freeze.—Mrs. M. L. Luebben.

Peach Cream.—Pare and stone 1 quart of very soft peaches. Add to them 1 pound of sugar, and mash them thoroughly. When ready to freeze, add 2 quarts rich cream, which when frozen will fill a dish holding four quarts.

Ice Cream.—3 eggs, 1 cup Crystal Flake, 3 scant cups sugar, 2 tablespoonfuls vanilla, 1 quart or more of cream. Beat the yolks of the eggs until very light. Add the sugar and beat again. Dissolve the flake in a cup of milk, set in a pan of hot water. Add the flake to the yolks and sugar, and strain through a cloth. Whip the whites of the eggs, and the cream, and add to the other ingredients. Place in the freezer and fill up with rich milk. Add the flavoring and freeze. The longer the eggs, sugar, and cream are beaten, the finer the cream when frozen. For 1 gallon of cream.—Mrs. A. C. Epperson.

Ice Cream.—Whip 1 quart cream and 1 small cup strawberries together. Add $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups sugar, turn onto a shallow pan, set on ice and salt, having the same proportion as for a freezer. When frozen cut in squares and serve. Very nice.—Mrs. J. W. Swanson, Sutton, Nebraska.

Ice Cream.—Put 1 quart milk on in double boiler. Beat 5 eggs, add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar, 1 teaspoonful cornstarch. Add to boiling milk. Let cook, remove from stove, add 1 quart cream.—Mrs. H. L. Davis.

Sherbet.—3 lemons, 3 oranges, 3 bananas, 3 cups sugar, 3 pints cold water, 3 beaten whites of eggs; freeze. Pineapple improves it.—Mrs. Ed Westering.

Ice Cream.—1 quart of fresh milk, 2 eggs, 2 tablespoonfuls of cornstarch, heat milk in a double boiler, then stir in cornstarch, mixed smooth in a little milk. Let it boil for a few minutes, remove from the stove, cool, stir in the eggs beaten with 1 cup of sugar. Add a pint of cream and flavoring.—Mrs. L. Jarrett.

Jell-O Ice Cream.—Dissolve 1 package of Jell-O Ice Cream Powder, any flavor, in 1 quart of milk and freeze it. There is nothing to be added and nothing else to do to make the most delicious ice cream.

Categories:

[Ice Cream](#), [Summer](#), [July](#)

The Fairmont Creamery Company



A 1921 exhibit for Better Butter, made by the Fairmont Creamery Company. NSHS RG4218.PH:1-10

The Fairmont Creamery Company was incorporated March 29, 1884, in Fairmont, Fillmore County, Nebraska. Wallace Wheeler, an implement dealer, and Joseph H. Rushton, an attorney, founded the company for the production and sale of butter, eggs, and poultry. Local townspeople and farmers owned the remainder of the total stock of five thousand dollars. From a small business, the company became one of the nation's largest food processors, later known as Fairmont Foods.



Insulated bag for Fairmont Ice Cream. NSHS 10586-45

During 1884 and 1885 the creamery operated only in the summer months due to a lack of raw materials. However, the company was soon a profitable enterprise for its stockholders. Its first product was butter, and the butter produced in Fairmont was recognized nationally for its excellence. During the next few years the Fairmont Creamery Company started six new plants in southeastern Nebraska towns, beginning in Crete in 1889. It eventually opened more than three thousand cream stations throughout the United States that provided a market for farmers' home-separated cream.



Feeding Chickens at Crete Plant

Categories:

[Crete](#), [Fairmont Creamery Company](#), [Fairmont Foods](#), [food](#)

Fun and Games

As we make our way through the hot days of summer, I'm reminded of similar hot summer days growing up on the farm. My brother and I spent many a summer day playing games in front of the window air conditioner or down in the basement where it was a good 20 degrees cooler than the rest of the house. We had a closet full of board games, card games and puzzles to keep us entertained. One game I remember playing as a young child is "Cootie." You would roll dice, and depending on your roll, you got to add different parts to your cootie. The first person to complete their cootie would win the game. This is an example of the game, ca. 1950, from our museum collections.



Cootie game owned by John and Lydia Peters of Seward (NSHS 11681-9)

Other play time diversions in our museum collections include these 8mm films (also owned by John and Lydia Peters).



Abbott and Costello 8mm film (NSHS 11681-27)



Mary's Little Lamb 8mm film (NSHS 11681-29)

What kinds of indoor activities did you (or your parents) use to keep busy during those hot days of summer?

-Tom Mooney, Curator of Manuscripts

Categories:

[children](#), [games](#), [toys](#)

Omaha's Memorial Park Riots of 1971

Good Morning
Omaha-Council Bluffs — Variable conditions, high to low 80s. Chance of evening showers.
OUR 100TH YEAR—35c 25c

Omaha World-Herald
OMAHA, NEBRASKA, WEDNESDAY, JULY 7, 1971—72 PAGES. 6

Inside Today
Nixon: Lift Morals
Nixon says docudance threaten nation. **Page 6.**
A judge blocks Jim Garrison from trying to arrest those who prepared bribery charges against him. **Page 18.**
Athletic Director Eddie Sutton will remain at Creighton University. **Page 25.**

Nixon Asks Clearance Compilation
By Ken W. Clawson
WASHINGTON (AP) — President Nixon has ordered all government agencies to compile lists of persons, in and out of government, who have top secret clearances — with the aim of sharply reducing the number of security clearances.

In a memo dated "Administratively Confidential," the White House also ordered federal agencies to initiate a review of outside individuals and organizations holding classified materials "... with the aim of drastically reducing such non-government holdings."

The memo, signed by Brig. Gen. Alexander M. Haig Jr., deputy assistant to the President for national security affairs, said the President has directed:

By noon Saturday, all federal agencies, including the White House itself, must submit a list of the number of government employees, outside consultants and private contractors who hold clearances for access to top secret information and "the various categories of compartmentalization designations."

July Deadline
By the end of July, the federal agencies are ordered to turn over to the White House the names of the holders of security clearances broken down by federal government and non-government employment.

"It is further directed that such responsible departments and agency initiate at once a review and screening of such top secret and non-government clearance presently held by individuals in the above employment categories with a view to effecting immediate reduction of all clearances which cannot be demonstrated to meet the requirements of strict need to know."

"Particular consideration is to be given to the screening of employees in the executive and contractual categories," the memo said.

The memo, written on White House stationery, was dated June 28, two days before Defense Secretary Melvin Laird ordered Air Force security men to take custody of all classified documents held by the Rand Corp., the leading private "think tank" engaged in defense research. Laird alleged earlier there were "security compromises" at Rand.

'Who' Unknown
Laird's action and Nixon's pledge to tighten security clearance followed disclosures June 26 by David E. Hoag, a former Rand researcher, that it was he who leaked secret Pentagon

Youths, Police Battle In Park Curfew Clash
What began as another peaceful evening in Memorial Park Tuesday ended in a bottle-throwing, club-swinging clash between youths and police attempting to enforce an 8 p.m. curfew in the park.

Misguided Ellyava that had been passed out in Omaha beginning last week ended youth in "massive party" at the park at 7 p.m. Tuesday for the "annual closing of Memorial Park"—but also to be prepared to go to jail. The gathering erupted into violence.

At least two Omaha police officers and five youths suffered injuries.

Rocks, Bottles
Youths threw rocks, bottles, but few cases, apples and other objects at police who attempted to enforce a curfew ordered earlier in the day by the City Council. Councilmen ordered the curfew after complaints by neighbors and others of drug traffic and other youth problems in the park.

About 12 arrests had been made by 1 a.m. today, including Tim Andrews, who edited newspaper and was in the park wearing a band with the letters "FUCK" on it. He had spoken against the curfew at the council meeting.

World Herald reporters estimated at least 500 persons, mostly youths, were in the park. A few small fires were started and at least one smoke bomb was thrown.

Bridge Asked For Bicycles, Pedestrians
By Conde Sargent
Arlene, Ia. (AP) — Pedestrians bearing nearly three thousand signatures, and asking for a pedestrian/bicycle bridge over the Missouri River between Nebraska this P.M. — the

Devaney Decides Rodgers Can Play With Big Red
Devaney said, "after very careful deliberation."

"We do not consider John's action in any way," Devaney said. "But we also feel that to deprive him of the opportunity to play football would work against the aims of protection."

Some Youths Weren't Out For Fresh Air
At 7 p.m. Tuesday night, the scene in Memorial Park looked about the same as it has on most previous evenings this season.

Young people gathered in

By David L. Bristow, Editor

July 6, 2021

Picture hundreds of White youths facing down police and chanting, "Hell no, we won't go!" The scene erupts into a "bottle-throwing, club-swinging clash between youths and police," in the words of the *Omaha World-Herald*. The year is 1971.

But the protest wasn't about the Vietnam War—not directly, anyway.

It was about a park curfew. In a larger sense, you could say it reflected the spirit of the times.

Fifty years have passed since Omaha's Memorial Park became a battleground for four successive nights, July 6-9, 1971. About hundred people were arrested or taken to a hospital, and public response ranged from outrage at today's spoiled youths to complaints about police vandalism and brutality. This is the story, drawn from contemporary news reports.

* * *

Tuesday, July 6 was to be the first night of an 8 p.m. curfew at Memorial Park, a popular gathering place for young people. Neighbors complained about drug and alcohol use and disruptive behavior. The city council had imposed a similar curfew the previous summer.

Some youths testified against the curfew at a city council meeting. Later, a flyer invited people to a July 6 rally at the park, promising "love and music" and "impromptu theater by the Omaha police" and "door prizes" including "a free ride to the police station, tour of the basement, free photo."

The flyer encouraged people to "stick up for your rights" but did not give specific instructions.

This was by design, said Timothy Andrews, an "underground editor" and member of the Omaha Yippies (Youth International Party). The Yippies organized the rally—or, in Andrews' words, "disorganized" it so that there would be "no leaders of the curfew resistance."

"We thought this would make the people the leaders," Andrews told the *West Omaha and Dundee Sun* on July 18.

In practice, this meant that anyone could step forward as a leader, and the crowd would either follow or not.

On Tuesday evening, about 500 people—mostly youths, almost all White—remained at the park when the police arrived in force about 8:30. By then people had blocked the park entrance with park benches and trashcans. Speaking through a bullhorn,

Police Chief Richard Andersen warned the youths that they were subject to arrest if they stayed.

“This is the people’s park and we’re the people!” someone replied. Others shouted, “Pig!” and “Oink!” The crowd soon took up the war protesters’ chant of “Hell no, we won’t go!”

By 9:15 the crowd had spilled into the streets, blocking Dodge and Farnam. Police reported that youths were “hitting the cars with clubs, bricks and bottles” and surrounded a police cruiser.

At 9:40 the police charged with nightsticks, driving the crowd back into the park. According to the *World-Herald*, youths “threw rocks, bottles, full beer cans, apples and other objects at police.” Police reportedly fired their weapons on at least two occasions, but no one was hit.

By the time it was over, thirteen people had been arrested, and eight others—ages 17 to 22—had been treated and released at local hospitals.

Two patrolmen* were also injured. Later that week, Patrolman George Dugan spoke to a reporter from his bed at Methodist Hospital. The 25-year-old Dugan—who had been struck in the chest with a brick—noted that he wasn’t much older than the young people at the park.

“I just can’t understand it,” he said. “They seem to want to kill somebody. Over what? A park closing?”

At a Wednesday press conference, Mayor Eugene Leahy warned that he would “not tolerate violence and anarchy.” Chief Anderson said he would “not lose faith in these young people,” adding that most of the youths would have left the park but that “impromptu leaders” told them to stay.

* * *

Reporters described the second night as more violent than the first, with fourteen young people (ages 16-22) treated and released at local hospitals, including five

young women. Two patrolmen were injured. More people brought weapons, including rocks, bottles, baseball bats, tire chains, axe handles, firecrackers, and “slingshots which hurl metal balls.”

The police likewise came better equipped, with every patrolman in riot gear. Using tear gas, police drove the crowd before them along Happy Hollow Boulevard and Farnam Street. Homeowners on Dodge Street stood on their front porches cheering the police. Later that evening a homeowner on Happy Hollow Boulevard fired a shotgun in the air twice. He said he feared for his family’s safety.

Police were afraid as well. From his hospital bed, Patrolman Dugan spoke of being scared on Tuesday night. He said the police could take the verbal abuse. “But when you start getting rocks thrown at you, you lose your temper. I don’t care who you are.”

People began complaining about excessive police violence. Starting Wednesday night, many patrolmen failed to wear name badges as required, which made it difficult to identify individuals.

Some bystanders said that police attacked them without provocation. One was a 25-year-old man who had been watching events from nearby Elmwood Park. When a crowd ran by, he and his family got into their car. He said five patrolmen smashed the windshield and side window. His five-year-old son suffered multiple cuts.

“The cops were enraged,” the man said.

That night, a WOW-TV cameraman named Richard “Pete” Petrashek was filming the scene when a patrolman clubbed him in the head. Police described it as an accident. Petrashek, who needed 15 stitches, later sued the City of Omaha, alleging that the city “encouraged police officers to resort to such acts of violence by laudatory and congratulatory statements” issued after each night. He further alleged that the city had failed to investigate the assault or even learn the name of the patrolman who attacked him.

Good Morning
Omaha-Council Bluffs-Park
cloudy and cooler. High around 40.

OUR 100TH YEAR—No. 251.

Omaha World-Herald

OMAHA, NEBRASKA, THURSDAY, JULY 6, 1971—36 PAGES 6

10c
Sunrise Edition

Coming Sunday

A Voice for Adults

Dr. K. Ross Toole has become a spokesman for the adult backwash to campus violence. In his book, "The Time Has Come," the University of Montana history professor writes about "the tyranny of a minority, the crusade of the spoiled children, the paternalistic abdication of responsibility and the lack of courage, integrity and wisdom on the part of our educational leaders."

A 3-part series of articles — excerpts from the book — will start in the Sunday World-Herald.

4-Alarm Fire Wrecks Part Of Sokol Hall

By Hal Foster

The first four-alarm fire in Omaha history Wednesday night destroyed the second floor of the 14-year-old Bohemian Catholic hall building, 130 South 24th Street.

Three firemen were treated for minor injuries during the 3-hour battle to control the blaze.

Fireman Michael Dwyer, 35, son of recently retired Fire Chief Martin Dwyer, was released from St. Joseph Hospital after being treated for cuts.

Capt. James F. Pichler, 35, was treated at Methodist Hospital for smoke inhalation. Another fireman continues to work was given surgery at the fire scene.

Sealed, Water Damage
James J. Dwyer, who runs the hall, said the fire started in the kitchen, where a stove was left on.

The hall is a fraternal organization of members of Catholicism.

Widened, Fanned
Fire Department communications supervisor, said the four-alarm system was initiated Jan. 20 to make the dispatching of an eighth and ninth pumper automatic in large fires.

Under the old three-alarm system, he said, the two engine companies making the eighth and ninth pumper had to be dispatched on a line by telephone. The new system saves time, he said.

Fire Chief Vernon Van Vleet

shoulder his wife Ann and their two dogs—walked to safety after being alerted by an off-duty policeman, Donald Conner.

Started on North
Conner was in a delivery vehicle at the time, a white pickup truck, and other members of a police softball team were having a low point game drink near door at the 30-Mat Tavern, 128 South 24th Street.

Conner said there was a fire, but he did not see any flames. He said the fire started on the north side of the building near a fire escape. It went up a second floor balcony to the roof and then spread, he said.

The first alarm was sounded at 8:31 p.m. The others came at 8:32, 8:33 and 8:34.

Red Fall
Four aerial trucks were used to help drench the 14-story hall. At least nine pumps and a special equipment truck were also called into use.

The building's roof collapsed. Passes to Page 4, Col. 2.

Argentina Plans Hijackers' Trials
Buenos Aires, Argentina — A federal appeals court Wednesday would decide if the

three men who were arrested in Argentina last week for hijacking a plane in the park



Four gas riot... surrounds police at intersection of Dodge Street and Happy Hollow Boulevard.

'10 White Panthers' Battles Start After Park 'Staredowns'

By Michael Kelly

Two persons from Michigan and Illinois who are members of the White Panther party came to Omaha over the weekend after they were told of the possible closing of Winnetka Park, an Omaha site frequented by the party's members.

James Strong, 21, of 501 Dodge Street, said he was in the Am Arbor, Mich., headquarters of the White Panthers two weeks ago to "expand the park's situation" in the group's history.

The White Panther party is a local counterpart of the Black Panther party.

There's Back
Strong said the 10 men in Omaha specifically because of the possible park closing. He said, however, the 10 did not organize, battle and march during the park in the park

on Wednesday. He said he was in the park on Tuesday. He said he was in the park on Tuesday.

Secret Meetings
Strong said the group again secretly. He said it generally is not as violent as the Yipies (Yipies International party). He said he was in the park on Tuesday.

They estimated about 20 persons in the park were out from Omaha.

Thomas F. Smith, 26, of Omaha, Ark., one of those arrested

Red Defector Brings Vital SALT Data

By Don Cook

Los Angeles Times Service.
Moscow — Impartant technical intelligence bearing directly on the vital problems of the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks is a new message from the Soviet Union through the captured Soviet scientist who defected to the West six weeks ago.

At the time of his defection via the British embassy in Paris during the Le Bourget, France,

Inside Today Deal With Cuba

U.S.-Cuba prisoner trade leaves fate of four Americans uncertain. Page 16.

A government report says the Pentagon is ignoring cost overruns and other problems with its B1 bomber. Page 18.

Training time for British Open lead; Rachel Pease will be a full-fledged member of Hall of Fame. Page 23.

Middle-income families will have to pay if their children are enrolled in the Head Start program. Page 24.

Youths Taste Fumes From Gas Machine

A staredown between police and young persons bent on reopening Memorial Park erupted into disorder for the second night Wednesday.

The violence in and around the park left law police

Other stories, pictures on Pages 2, 14.

By Thursday, some Omaha stores were reporting a run on gas masks and slingshots. Thirteen people were arrested that night, bringing the total to 48. The number of injuries was not immediately clear. Youths egged passing cars, broke out a traffic light, damaged a cruiser, and threw a Molotov cocktail.

Reporters also witnessed police smashing the windows of an unoccupied car that had the words "love" and "peace" painted on it, and saw patrolmen pull two motorcyclists off their bikes and beat them with nightsticks. Ten to twelve patrolmen—about a third of the police on duty at the park—walked down the street smashing car windows as they went. They pulled some people from their cars and beat them. Reporters said the motorists were apparently trying to leave the area.

"Chief Andersen said that spectators in cars and 'idiot tourists' were a problem for police," the *World-Herald* reported the next day.

Good Morning

Omaha-Council Bluffs — Vari-
ous conditions and mild with
chance of showers. High 60-65.

OUR 100TH YEAR—No. 212

Omaha World-Herald

OMAHA, NEBRASKA, FRIDAY, JULY 9, 1971—4¢ PAGE 5 6

Sunrise Edition
10c



John Sujovic, 15, of Kearney gets autographs from three beauties . . . From left, Misses Dommett, Ford and Jochims.

21 Beauties Vie For Title, Ticket To Atlantic City

By Tom Allan

Kearney, Neb. — Linda Sue Aldrich, 20, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ray Aldrich of McCook, is the grandstand winner of the 21st annual Miss Nebraska Pageant.

Linda is one of 21 beauties who Thursday night at the Kearney High School auditorium began the quest for \$2,500 in scholarships and the

Prelim Winners

Linda Sue Aldrich of Kearney, representing Lincoln, was the leading girl competitor Thursday night. Miss Kearney State College, Peggy Smith, was the talent competitor.

Right to represent Nebraska at the Miss America Pageant in Atlantic City in September.

Other Titles

This year the 1971 Miss Nebraska Pageant was the 21st annual contest of the University of Nebraska—Lincoln since its establishment in 1950.

Likely GOP Secretary Introduced to Leaders

By Larry Wilson

Republican Sen. James Buckley, Jr. introduced his son, James P. Buckley, Jr., to the GOP leaders Thursday night at the University of Nebraska—Lincoln.

The GOP Chairman, Billings, introduced Buckley, Jr. to the GOP leaders at the University of Nebraska—Lincoln.

The two will attend a similar function for the 2nd District tonight at Omaha.

The incoming chairman, James P. Buckley, Jr., of the Grand Island Republican County Club, will be confirmed soon.

Wilson would succeed Joe Edwards, who left the post May 1 to study for his Ph.D.

Edwards will travel Aug. 1, leaving state party headquarters at Lincoln. His salary will be \$10,000.

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Whom . . . GOP post.

for organizational talents while serving in the company of Sen. Carl Curtis and Lt. Gov. John Evenden.

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McCracken: Money Goals Unattainable

Washington (UPI) — The White House administration said for the first time Thursday that the goal it set in January for the economy's growth in 1971 and for a rapid reduction of inflation and unemployment are now unattainable.

Paul W. McCracken, chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors, formerly there in the name of the House-Senate Economic Conference.

He said unemployment and inflation "have turned out to be more stubborn than we expected." In January when President Nixon forecast a 3 per cent growth rate this year in the nation's gross national product (GNP), the total value of all goods and services produced by the nation.

Included in the administration's forecast of a \$100 billion GNP were more than 100 million for the economy.

—An unemployment rate of 3 per cent by the end of this year and of 4.5 per cent by mid-1972. The rate stood at 5.4 per cent in June and averaged near or above 4 per cent for the first five months of the year.

—An inflation rate of 4 per cent at the end of this year and of 5.5 per cent by mid-1972. McCracken said the latest figures show the inflation rate approaching 6 per cent, but the year's average is expected to be higher than that.

To reach these goals, the administration said last January, the GNP would have to reach \$100 billion.

Strong Quake Rocks Chile

Santiago, Chile (AP) — A severe earthquake rocked central Chile and much of Argentina last Thursday night. In Santiago, a number of buildings were damaged, including the city's main cathedral.

Ground may be broken for the proposed city-county facility in mid-October, two engineers said.

Seismographs located the

Strife Continues For Third Night



Ball bats were in evidence . . . at rock concert.

Ball bats were in evidence . . . at rock concert.

2 Predict Civic Center Groundbreaking in Fall

By Steve Jordan

Ground may be broken for the proposed city-county facility in mid-October, two engineers said.

Some county officials had indicated earlier they expected a fall to be the best timing for the

Police Again Wield Sticks, Fire Tear Gas

Youths and police clashed a third straight night near Memorial Park Thursday.

At least 15 persons were arrested in suspicion of a variety of offenses, including possession of weapons, carrying a concealed weapon, hitting and jostling.

An undetermined number of young persons were injured by nightstick-wielding police. Two police officers were taken to a hospital.

Gas-mask-wearing officers again used tear gas to break up crowds estimated at 300 to 500 persons who gathered along Dodge Street north of Memorial Park, forming rocks, bricks, and a molotov cocktail and other objects in protest.

Police said gasbombs smashed the red light and damaged a door to eye center.

Investigation

Public Safety Director Al Peterson said he will investigate reports that officers smashed car windows as they walked along Dodge after dispersing a crowd.

The 12 arrests brought to 41 the number of arrests since downtown began after the City Council Tuesday night at 8 p.m. curfew at the park, following complaints of drug dealing and other youth problems.

The park was closed without incident at 8 p.m. Thursday. An estimated 1,000 persons, mostly

Meanwhile, south of Dodge Street, about a thousand people attended an outdoor rock concert at Elmwood Park. The show ended about 10:30—which was OK because there was no curfew at Elmwood. John Mueller, a 24-year-old Air Force sergeant, walked back to his car with his wife.

"Just as I was starting the engine," he said, "someone said policemen were coming up the street. I saw two policemen running toward the car. The first one... ran directly to the car and smashed the windshield with his club. I leaned over to protect my wife from glass... and the same policeman smashed the front window on the driver's side. I got out of the car to protest. I think I said: 'Hey, sir, we're not doing anything—,' Before I could finish, that first policeman raised back with his nightstick and hit me in the eye."

The second patrolman also hit Mueller, who staggered across the street and collapsed in the grass while his wife screamed. The police left the scene. A group of young men offered to drive Mueller to the hospital.

Mueller had previously worked as a *Stars and Stripes* reporter while serving a tour of duty in Vietnam. With his head bleeding, he told his companions to take him to the World-Herald offices, where he spoke to reporters before being taken to St. Joseph Hospital.

Mueller's story ran on page one the following afternoon. A *World-Herald* editorial said that police behavior on Thursday night "marred what has otherwise been a good job of law enforcement in a difficult situation."

Good Afternoon
Omaha-Council Bluffs—Choice of rain tonight. Fair Saturday. High 80s.

OUR 100TH YEAR—No. 252.

Omaha World-Herald

OMAHA, NEBRASKA, FRIDAY, JULY 9, 1971—46 PAGES. 2

Metropolitan Edition

10c

U.S. Economy Won't Reach Nixon's Goal

Washington (AP)—The Nixon administration has abandoned, for all practical purposes, its target of a \$1,000-billion national economy this year, the most controversial forecast in its January economic report to Congress.

Dr. Paul W. McCracken, chairman of President Nixon's Council of Economic Advisors, told Congress Thursday that, pending the economy report that target in the last half of the year could become realistic.

McCracken acknowledged the economy in the first six months of 1971 fell below the administration's forecast, "while inflation has continued higher and the rate of real output and employment have risen less than was expected."

In January, the administration said the Gross National Product, output of the nation's goods and services, should climb by 9 per cent this year to \$1,000 billion.

That kind of GNP growth was needed, he said, to reduce unemployment to about 4.5 per cent and inflation, as measured by GNP standards, to 2 per cent by mid-1972.

McCracken was more cautious about these predictions in mid-July. He said the economy had been slower than expected, saying only that the rising rate of inflation would determine this year and employment would decline.

"There is a danger that if the GNP were to rise 10 per cent, or be pushed up, to reach the target previously put forward, that would revive inflation or at least seriously delay its abatement," he said.

McCracken said administration fear of an acceleration in the inflation rate was the main reason President Nixon chose to reject his recommendations as so economic stimulus.

"We are now seeing how difficult it is to

Inside Today

Jim Morrison, lead singer of the Doors, dies in a bathtub in Paris.
Cavanaugh and Hansen predict city-county building groundbreaking for September; Bradley says De-
Yankovs leave South Vietnamese to hold Fairfax
Charlie 2 by themselves.

Chief: 'Anyone Around Park Tonight Could Be Arrested'

Police Chief Richard B. Anderson, displaying two explosive devices that were confiscated near Memorial Park Thursday night, issued a strong warning Friday to courtesy visitors.

"These people will think these kids are taking around. But these are not a bunch of young people playing games," the chief said.

"I would recommend that if you are within hearing of my voice tonight, you get out of the range of my voice."

Anderson said the devices were used the night of Thursday night, the third night of disorder following a City Council-imposed 8 p.m. Memorial Park curfew, issued "fewer demonstrators and more spectators."

The chief said the devices, which he has been using to disperse crowds, will be replaced, if a crowd gathers again tonight, with crowd control speakers.

"Any car" he said that if there is trouble tonight, anyone at the scene, including spectators and even persons standing on their lawn, will be subject to arrest.

He warned persons to stay out of the area generally bounded by Fairview and Fifty-fifth Streets, Capital Avenue and the



Policemen crouch behind cruisers on Dodge Street just west of Happy Hollow Boulevard. . . . Yankovs threw rocks, firecrackers and a smoke bomb, police retaliated with several tear gas bombs prior to charging the crowd.

SAC Sergeant: Policemen Damaged Car, Beat Him

A 24-year-old Air Force sergeant told The World-Herald he was beaten by two policemen without provocation Thursday night near Fifty-fifth and Fairview Streets.

Sgt. John Mueller, a graduate of the University of Missouri, Journalism School and a former reporter on the staff of a daily newspaper in Memphis, Tenn., came to The World-Herald with blood streaming from one of his eyes and his right eye.

He said he wanted to tell of the incident as soon as possible — before he received hospital treatment.

Mueller, who was a combat correspondent in Vietnam for the Armed Forces daily newspaper, *Stars & Stripes*, before he reported to Omaha Air Force base two weeks ago, said he and his wife, Teresa, 22, attended the rock concert at Rosewood Park. They were accompanied by another Omaha sergeant, known to them only as Dennis, he said.

As soon as the concert ended, Mueller said in a follow-up interview Friday, "we walked directly back to the car, which was parked at Fifty-fifth and Fairview. We got in — Teresa in the front seat with me and Dennis in the back seat."

"Just as I was starting the engine, someone said policemen were coming up the street."

"I saw two policemen running toward the car. The first one, a man who appeared to be in his late 40's and was wearing glasses, ran directly to the car and smashed the windshield with his club."

"I tried over to protect my wife from glass — and bits of glass were all over the place — and the second policeman smashed the front window as the driver's side."

"I got out of the car in protest. I think I said, 'Hey, hey, we're not doing anything.'"

"Before I could finish, that first policeman rushed back with his nightstick and hit me in the eye. My glasses were smashed over my face. Then he hit me again. I think, but I can't remember where."

"The second policeman yelled something like: 'That was not heavy, wasn't it?' Then he hit me a couple of times with his nightstick."

"I spun around. I had my hand over my eye, trying to hold back the blood, and I managed to stagger across the street to the grass and fall

Police Break Glass in Cars Along Street

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Other police-park stories, Pages 2, 6, 11.

reference to the University of Nebraska at Omaha. He indicated there will be a large number of arrests if the demonstrators continue a fourth night.

Anderson said displays of a beating knife with a black blade and a large, professional-looking knife, which police confiscated near the park Thursday night.

He said the weapons, especially the explosives, which were large firecrackers containing a small quantity of dynamite, could "cause extensive damage, particularly to



Mueller . . . looks through broken rear window.

Friday night saw 26 arrests, but the crowd was smaller and less violent. Most of the arrests came from a group throwing firecrackers at passing cars from a Dodge Street overpass.

With that, Memorial Park was quiet again. The city council refused to reconsider the curfew. The protest, such as it was, had made compromise politically toxic.

In all, the *World-Herald* estimated that a little more than 100 people had been arrested or treated for injuries, 92 male and 82 giving an Omaha address.

“I’ve always felt we had a good relationship with the kids,” said Patrolman Dugan. “I’ve never had a single problem with the young folks... until now.”

On July 11, the *World-Herald* featured interviews with some of the young people from the park, trying to understand why it all happened. One 21-year-old man said that youths had been hanging out at the park for years. He didn’t think that most of the Tuesday night crowd had come to fight with police. A small number of self-styled leaders had stirred them up. And after the first night, “there were people out there wanting a fight, people on both sides spoiling for violence.”

* * *

Only one patrolman was fired from the Omaha Police Department, a man who was nearing the end of his six-month probationary period. He had been one of the windshield-breakers. The Omaha Police Union defended him, blaming the police administration for sending an inexperienced cop into such a situation. In a July 17 editorial, the *World-Herald* quoted with approval the words of a deputy chief: “Anyone with any common sense knows not to destroy other people’s property.” Chief Andersen said on July 28 that he had “no evidence” to discipline any other patrolmen.

On July 19 the *World-Herald* reported that various civic groups were commenting on proposed new police policies for handling public complaints. Most were positive, but the Rev. John Whittington, pastor of Mount Nebo Baptist Church (a Black congregation) was unimpressed. He said police complaints had long been a “sore

point” in his community. Regarding Memorial Park—a disturbance that involved few if any Black people—he observed: “A policeman was fired for breaking windshields of cars. We have complained about them breaking heads.”

* * *

In the *World-Herald*’s “Public Pulse” letters column, no one defended the behavior of the rock-throwers and police-taunters, but some writers exonerated the police, emphasizing the need for law and order. Others lamented the sad state of today’s youth, blaming parents for a lack of discipline. Still others faulted the City Council for its earlier failures to compromise or listen to the youth.

By then, any chance that the City Council would amend the curfew was gone. Council members were determined not to allow the youths to gain anything from the riots.

In hindsight, one of the striking things about the riots was the reluctance of city officials to blame local youths generally. Even after the second night, Mayor Leahy remained convinced that the violence was the work of out-of-town agitators. Chief Andersen, however, estimated that only 25-50 of the youths were from out of town, and said there was no evidence that they were the ones inciting the violence. Yippie leader Timothy Andrews blamed “short-haired weirdos” from west Omaha, meaning “straight” (non-hippie) kids who were just looking for trouble.

The *World-Herald* reported some of the convictions and fines, but soon tried to change the subject. A July 28 feature titled “Our Peaceful Youth” profiled several young people (all of them White) who were working summer jobs, doing volunteer work, or training for sports. The article’s main point was that for all the blood and ink spilled over Memorial Park, the great majority of Omaha youths had stayed away.

*Omaha police were known as “patrolmen” until 1974, when they became “police officers.” OPD began using the gender-neutral term when it hired its **first female police officers**.

Sources:

Except where noted, this article is based on the Sunrise and Metropolitan editions of the *Omaha World-Herald*, July 7-10, 1971.

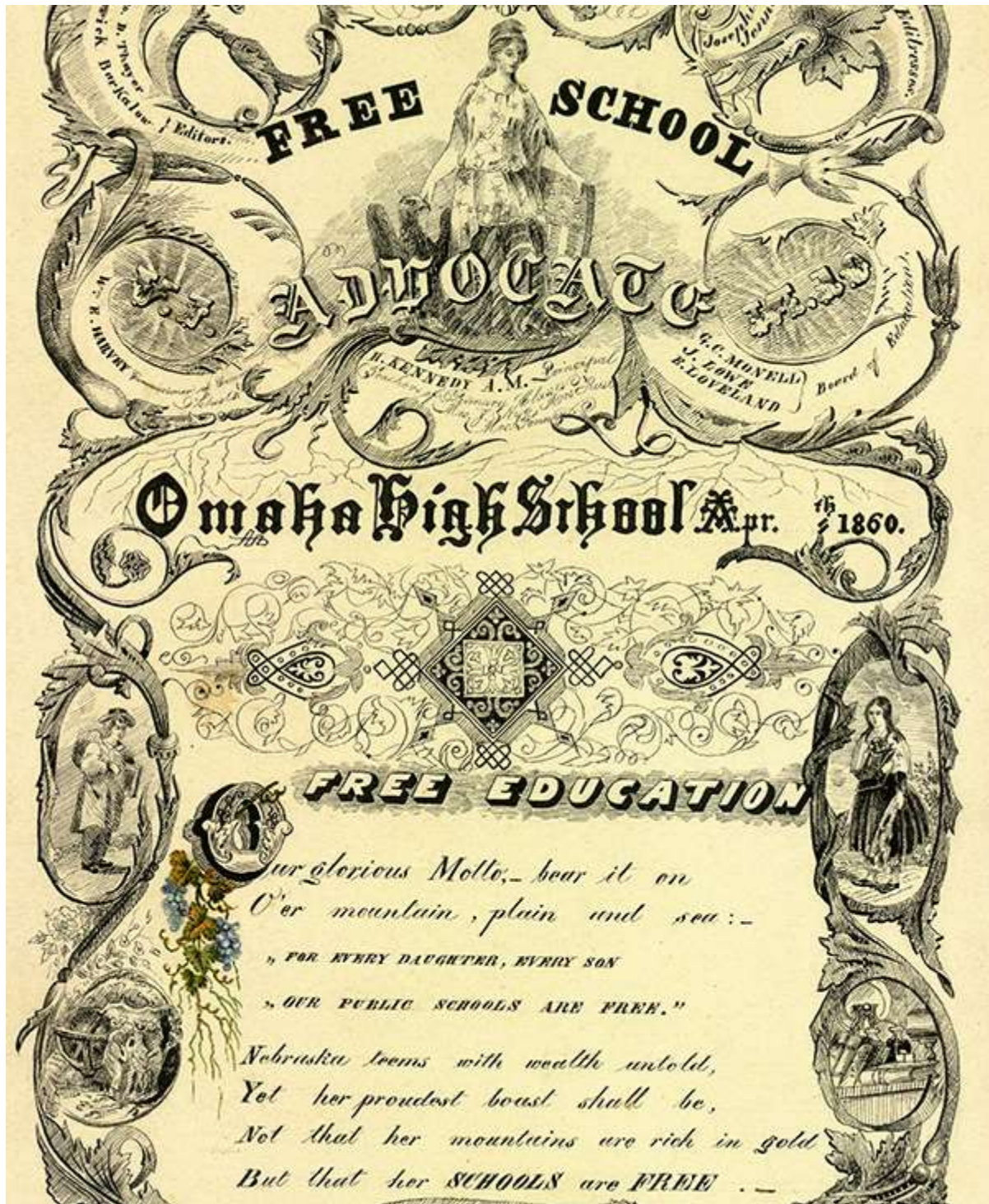
Read more about Nebraska during this period:

- **"And then the burnings began': Omaha's urban revolts and the meaning of political violence"** (*Nebraska History Magazine*, PDF)
- **UNL student reaction to the Cambodian Incursion and the Kent State Shootings, May 1970** (*Nebraska History Magazine*, PDF)

Categories:

Omaha; youth; police

Nebraska's first school newspaper celebrated a radical idea: free schools



By David L. Bristow, Editor

Published weekly by Omaha high school students, the first issue of the *Free School Advocate* appeared on December 21, 1859. It may be Nebraska's first school newspaper. Students contributed news, essays, poems, fiction, and humor, and student editors copied everything in neat longhand. Each edition's single copy was read aloud to students.

This detail from an April 1860 edition celebrates an idea that was not yet fully embraced across the US: free public education. The idea wasn't new, but it had spread slowly. The "common schools movement" of the mid-nineteenth century borrowed Prussian ideas such as teacher training and age-graded classrooms.

The verse above expresses the ideal:

FREE EDUCATION

Our glorious Motto, bear it on

O'er mountain, plain and sea:

"For every daughter, every son

"Our public schools are free."

Nebraska teems with wealth untold,

Yet her proudest boast shall be,

Not that her mountains are rich in gold

But that her SCHOOLS are FREE.

The line “every daughter, every son” had its limitations. Racial discrimination **limited opportunities for non-white children**. And districts with a small tax base found it difficult to afford adequate schools.

Incidentally, the bit about gold and mountains wasn’t a joke. At the time, Nebraska Territory’s western boundary extended into present-day Colorado, which saw a major gold rush starting in 1859.

(Image credit: History Nebraska RG4298.AM)

Posted 3/29/2021

Reference:

Joanne M. Marshall, “Common Schools Movement,” (2012). In J. A. Banks (Ed.), Encyclopedia of Diversity in Education. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
doi: [10.4135/9781452218533.n131](https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452218533.n131).

Categories:

[schools; Omaha; Nebraska Territory](#)

How much is a teacher worth? What Nebraska paid teachers in the 1920s



Photo: Rural school near Hay Springs, Nebraska, circa 1910. RG2089-05

By David L. Bristow, Editor

Most Nebraska teachers were paid poverty wages in the early 1920s, even before an economic recession prompted school districts to slash budgets even further. In 1922 a statewide publication called *The Nebraska Teacher* calculated how much money teachers actually needed. The result wasn't necessarily what taxpayers and school boards wanted to hear.

“The salaries of teachers absorb about two-thirds of the school budget in most schools,” wrote A.L. Caviness, president of the State Teachers’ College in Peru (today’s Peru State College). “To reduce taxation, therefore, the first thought is to cut salaries and the result is obtained.”

Then as now, Nebraskans complained about their property taxes.

Caviness suggested that each district put together a “representative committee, including a member of the school board, a business man, a professional man, a mother of a family, a club woman, a teacher and a heavy taxpayer” (i.e., a wealthy citizen) to calculate:

1. Cost of room for 12 months
2. Cost of meals for 12 months
3. Cost of laundry for 12 months
4. Allowance for doctor, dentist, etc.
5. Allowance for clothing for 12 months
6. Allowance for church, charity, etc.
7. Allowance for investment or saving

Was Caviness suggesting that salaries be cut to that level? Consider another article in the same issue. Here’s what G. H. Lake, school superintendent at Orleans, came up with:

Teacher's Cost of Living 1921-22 Twelve Months		
Salary	\$1125.00	
Incidentals	\$ 78.00	
Board	432.00	
Room	120.00	
Clothing	200.00	
Doctor or Dentist.....	25.00	
Laundry	50.00	
Railroad fare.....	52.00	
Agency	
Insurance	
Interest on money for schooling...	
Professional Magazines.../.....	10.00	
dues	
State Ass'n railroad.....	
hotel	28.00	
Amount applied on principal.....	
Summer session 1922.....	100.00	
Bank deposit or loans.....	
Charity and church.....	20.00	
School amusements and others....	10.00	
Study Center.....	
	<u>\$1125.00</u>	<u>\$1125.00</u>

The lines left blank for lack of extra money are the main point.

“If such a teacher is to make any investments, or to save money for a rainy day,” Lake wrote, “it is clear that she can do so on her present salary only at the expense of her own further self-improvements.”

Notice that one of the blank lines is for insurance. Teachers weren’t paid sick leave or provided with health insurance. They had to buy their own, if they could afford it. A typical Orleans teacher could not.



Who will pay your doctor, your nurse and your board bill when you are sick?

Now is the Time to Think About It

Winter is here with its colds, chills and fevers, its lagrippe and pneumonia, its tonsilitis and other afflictions—also its long list of Accident possibilities.

A FEW CENTS A DAY KEEPS DANGER AWAY

The Teachers Casualty Underwriters is the only institution of its kind in the world. It is the National Organization of Teachers for Teachers. It was projected and organized, and is now conducted by people who have had a long experience in teaching. It is the one protective agency of the profession.

Thousands of teachers, by enrolling in the T. C. U., have realized *peace of mind and certainty of income*. You are equally entitled to this protection. Send your name and address for complete information as to what the T. C. U. will do for you.

Teachers' Casualty Underwriters
431 T. C. U. BUILDING LINCOLN, NEBRASKA

To the T. C. U., 431 T. C. U. Building, Lincoln, Nebr.
Please send me information about your Protective Benefits.

Name _____

Address _____

Please mention THE NEBRASKA TEACHER when writing to advertisers.

Image: Health insurance ad from The Nebraska Teacher, December 1921.

Salaries were set by individual districts. The Fairbury superintendent wrote that “normal” graduates were paid \$1,000 to \$1,400 a year; those with a bachelor’s degree earned \$1,200 to \$1,700. (Teachers’ colleges were called “normal schools” and offered diplomas roughly equivalent to a modern associate’s degree.)

Rural districts paid less, and as a result many rural teachers were barely educated themselves. [Mari Sandoz](#) was seventeen when she passed her eighth-grade examination in 1913 (she’d missed a lot of school; not unusual for the time). Without telling her domineering father, she soon saddled up a horse and rode eighteen miles to Rushville to take the rural teacher’s examination. She became a rural schoolteacher when she was still a year under Nebraska’s legal age for teaching. “That was not unusual on the frontier,” writes Sandoz’ biographer, Helen Stauffer.

In September 1921, *The Nebraska Teacher* condemned the underfunding of rural schools, complaining that nationally, half of all schools “have less than \$1000 a year to spend for all purposes.” In York County, Nebraska—a relatively prosperous county—70 of the county’s 103 schools spent less than \$1,000 a year for all expenses.

Such schools, *The Nebraska Teacher* argued, did not adequately educate their students. In Buffalo County, “not one of the poor counties of the state,” 80 of the county’s 118 schools operated for less than \$750 a year. “Two schools in the county did not graduate a single pupil from the eighth grade in eight years. The median number of [eighth grade] graduates from all the rural schools in this county for 8 years was 1.06 pupils.”

Rather than reduce teacher salaries, *The Nebraska Teacher* argued that both rural and urban communities needed to spend more. “The purpose of the public schools is to train boys and girls so that they may become helpful and efficient citizens in their communities,” wrote J. H. Beveridge, superintendent of Omaha schools.

Beveridge acknowledged that “it is difficult to measure the value of a school in dollars and cents,” but he didn’t question whether or not it was appropriate to make dollars and cents the universal measure of value. Perhaps he knew his audience. He titled his article “Public Schools as an Investment.”

“If the public schools were taken out of your city your real estate would be almost without value,” he wrote, arguing that good schools boosted earnings, commerce, and property values.

“You are a stockholder in the public schools,” he said.

As for the teachers themselves, *The Nebraska Teacher* didn’t make a business argument so much as a humane and patriotic one. “Teachers are human and must live,” A. L. Caviness wrote, “but their patriotism and loyalty is on a par at least with the most devoted of public servants.”

(posted 3/30/2021)

Sources:

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